

# The Illinois Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators

April 3, 2012

Dear Policy Makers and Stakeholders,

The **Illinois Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators** (ILAECTE) is an affiliate organization of the National Association of Early Childhood Teacher Educators. The purposes of the organization are to:

- Advocate for improvements in early childhood teacher education in the State of Illinois
- Provide a forum for consideration of issues and concerns of interest to early childhood teacher educators in the state of Illinois
- Provide a communication network for early childhood teacher educators in the State of Illinois
- Facilitate the interchange of information and ideas about research and practice
- Promote the professional growth of our membership

Members (28 members were present at the Spring 2012 meeting, representing 15 colleges and universities) of the Illinois Association for Early Childhood Teacher Educators (ILAECTE) voted at its meeting on March 30, 2012, to:

- Recommend that the following grade and age ranges be adopted for teacher licensure in the State of Illinois:
  - Early Childhood Education Licensure for Birth through Grade 3
  - Elementary Licensure for Grades 3-6
  - Middle School Licensure for Grades 6-9.

These grade-level splits:

- Reflect the developmental stages of children and youth
- Correspond to shifts in pedagogical approaches related to development
- Reflect the common core content, and assessment
- Split the grade levels evenly and represent four statutory grade levels (K-12) in the Illinois school system.

**We believe this equitable split of the IL initial teaching license will have the most potential to prepare the very best teachers for Illinois children.**

Our vote represents the finest thinking of early childhood educators steeped in the research and best practice for young children and their families. Teacher preparation programs incorporate critical foundational principles of brain development and early learning necessary to effectively teach young children and engage their families. Our programs address the development of curricula for young children that are broad-based, including the use of directed teaching,

project-based learning, and inter-disciplinary teaching. These approaches are in addition to the development of focused, effective instructional strategies on the assessment and implementation of early literacy and mathematics curricula—the heart of the IL Common Core. In the bullet points below, see the outline of how effective early childhood teacher preparation programs can meet the important challenge of preparing the children of Illinois for college and career ready occupations.

Illinois New Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core Expects High School Graduates to

- Master rigorous content
- Apply knowledge through high-order skills
- Compete in global economy
- Demonstrate math and English Language Arts achievement on standardized tests
- Demonstrate digital literacy and competence

Early Childhood Education, Birth through Grade 3 Prepares Children to

- Engage in teacher-directed learning experiences
- Act effectively in inquiry-based curricula
- Collaborate with peers in learning activities
- Acquire literacy and mathematical skills, knowledge, and comprehension capacity
- Apply literacy and mathematical learning across the curriculum
- Demonstrate self-efficacy through such behaviors as initiative, persistence, attention, and self-regulation
- Utilize technology and interactive media effectively as digital citizens

Teachers prepare the learning environment for successful academic achievement by

- “Creating a caring community of learners
- Teaching to enhance development and learning
- Planning curriculum to achieve important goals
- Assessing children’s development and learning
- Establishing reciprocal relationships with families”

(Copple and Bredekamp, 2009, pp. 16-23)

- Employing evidence-based practice for all young children
- Respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity of children and families
- Appreciating a strength-based approach to young children with special needs

Early Childhood Education Assesses Outcomes Regularly and Implements Evidence-based improvements by

- Screening young children as they transition from one program to another
- Documenting child progress on standardized instruments and classroom work samples
- Conducting diagnostic assessments to promote learning for individuals
- Evaluating programs against standards
- Observing and conferring teachers to ensure high quality programs through on-going professional development

Teacher Preparation Programs prepare candidates who can

- Reduce learning gaps and increase achievement of all children
- Think critically, analytically, and evaluatively
- Facilitate transition of children and families across childcare and school settings
- Apply knowledge of development to promote child learning
- Apply content knowledge of the liberal arts in the development of curricula for all ages (0-8)
- Recognize individual variation in development and individualize instruction accordingly
- Facilitate development of all learners through a recognition of the complexities of social and cultural contexts

### References:

- Copple, C. & Bredekamp, S. Eds, (2009) *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs from Birth through Age 8. 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Common Core Standards (<http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards> Accessed March 29, 2012)
- NAEYC's Standards for Professional Preparation. (<http://www.naeyc.org/positionstatements> Accessed March 29, 2012)
- NAEYC and Fred Rogers Center for Early Learning and Children's Media at Saint Vincent College (2012) Technology and Interactive Media as Tools in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8.
- New Illinois Learning Standards Incorporating the Common Core ([http://www.isbe.state.il.us/common\\_core/default.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/common_core/default.htm) Accessed March 29, 2012)
- Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) (<http://www.parcconline.org/about-parcc> Accessed March 29, 2012)

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